



Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO)

Advanced, Integrated Web Access to EPA and State Compliance and Enforcement Data

Public Briefing Package
November 18, 2002

ECHO Summary

- ◆ The Enforcement and Compliance History Online Web site contains compliance and enforcement data for over 800,000 regulated facilities.
- ◆ The release of compliance and enforcement data on the Internet will:
 - Raise awareness of environmental compliance among companies and the public.
 - Contribute to increasing compliance with environmental laws.

ECHO Schedule and Communication

- ◆ EPA will launch ECHO on Nov. 20 on a “pilot” basis to provide industry with a data quality review opportunity, and to provide public review and comment.
- ◆ All reports will be clearly marked as “pilot.”
- ◆ EPA plans to remove “pilot” designation and caveats after EPA and the States have sufficiently worked through reported errors and comments.
- ◆ The pilot site release and 60-day comment period will be announced via a Federal Register Notice.
- ◆ The Agency also intends to make a press announcement.

Public Access to Compliance and Enforcement Data - Background



- ◆ EPA maintains the Integrated Data for Enforcement Analysis (IDEA) system.
- ◆ IDEA downloads compliance/enforcement data from many separate tracking systems once per month.
- ◆ IDEA has been available to the public since 1990 on a subscription basis, and also is used to answer FOIA requests.
- ◆ ECHO is a set of easy-to-use Web interfaces that send queries to IDEA.

Background - continued

- ◆ ECHO is the culmination of a five-year effort to make it easier for the public to search for information that is already available through FOIA request or mainframe computer subscription. This effort included:
 - The release of the Sector Facility Indexing Project in 1998 (complete data for five industries).
 - EPA-State internal tool (OTIS) has promoted use of data in all 50 States (over 300,000 EPA/State queries run to date).
 - The release of a joint EPA-State Workgroup recommendation for posting a national Web site on the Internet (June 2000).
 - The release of a four-State pilot (AK, ID, OR, WA) providing reports for 40,000 facilities in 2001.
 - A comprehensive eight-month data review period with the States from March 2002-November 2002.
- ◆ EPA has received FOIA requests asking that the four-State pilot be released nationally.

ECHO Content

- ◆ The information provided on ECHO relates to facilities regulated as Clean Air Act (CAA) stationary sources, as Clean Water Act (CWA) permitted dischargers (under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)), and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) hazardous waste generators/handlers.
- ◆ Databases used in ECHO:
 - Air Facility System (AFS) – CAA
 - Permit Compliance System (PCS) – CWA NPDES
 - Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Information system (RCRAInfo) – RCRA
 - Integrated Compliance Information System (ICIS) – multi-statute Federal enforcement data
- ◆ ICIS includes EPA cases beyond the three statutes mentioned above.

What Data are Included in ECHO?

- ◆ Basic Name and Address of Each Facility (800,000+)
- ◆ Facility Characteristics (type of permit, lat/long, SIC code, etc.)
- ◆ Inspection History (inspections over the last two years)
- ◆ Compliance Status/Violations (current and historical over two years)
 - Includes information about pollutants with violation
 - Includes whether the violation was significant

What Data are Included in ECHO?

- ◆ Formal Enforcement Actions (taken during last 2 years)
- ◆ Penalties Assessed (during last 2 years)
- ◆ Demographics (within 1, 3, and 5 miles of a facility)
- ◆ Key compliance and enforcement data includes a mix of EPA and State activities.

Ensuring Quality of Data

- ◆ EPA carefully reviewed the results of both the Sector Facility Indexing Project and Region 10 Pilot Project.
- ◆ EPA Regions and States participated in an extensive data quality review from March to November 2002.
- ◆ OECA provided guidance and search tools to allow Regions and States to easily identify and correct data errors.
- ◆ States have made considerable efforts to review and monitor the data beginning in March 2002.
- ◆ States that are concerned about specific data quality issues (e.g., missing data) have alerted us, and these caveats are posted on the site.

Ensuring Quality of Data: Online Error Correction



- ◆ Efforts made by EPA and States to date can be effectively augmented with additional feedback from users.
- ◆ ECHO will allow users to submit potential errors via an online process.
- ◆ Errors will be entered in OEI's Integrated Error Correction Process database and will be routed to the appropriate data owner designated by the Region or State.
- ◆ An EPA/State data steward network has been established to handle reported errors.
 - More than 125 State data stewards have signed up from 52 States/Districts/Territories.

Summary

- The release of the pilot ECHO site on the Internet provides an important e-government initiative that makes it easier for the public to know whether facilities are complying with their permits and environmental regulations.
- While publicly available through narrow channels, ECHO now brings this information within reach of the average citizen.

Summary

- EPA hopes that the 60-day review period can be used constructively to gather feedback from the public, and ensure that possible data errors are corrected.
- EPA will evaluate these comments to determine how ECHO will be updated and improved in the future.